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San Francisco's **Museum of Craft and Folk Art** presents
The Shape of Things: Paper Traditions and Transformations
November 14, 2008—February 15, 2009

Artists include: Reed Anderson, Gene Apellido, Mike Arcega, Jiyoung Chung, Adriane Colburn, Robert J. Lang, Jennifer Falck Linssen, Linda Mihara, and Gina Osterloh.

As the recent Slow Food convention in San Francisco demonstrates, the words “slow” and “tradition” are rising above their tarnished reputation. The same shift in perception appears to be happening with the word “craft.” In this context the Museum of Craft and Folk Art is proud to present *The Shape of Things: Paper Traditions and Transformations*, which explores the history of cut, folded, and molded paper, alongside contemporary artists who introduce fresh perspectives on those traditional forms.

From the unique to ubiquitous, the exhibition examines paper traditions from Asia, specifically from China, Japan, the Philippines, and Korea, and includes papercuts, origami, katagami, paper lanterns, papier-mâché, and paper boxes. Juxtaposing the work with that of contemporary artists demonstrates how traditional arts, folk art, contemporary craft, and fine art are all part of the same continuum.

In China, paper cuts date back thousands of years, and today, this popular folk art is still practiced with

varying degrees of skill and a diversity of styles and themes. The exhibition includes traditional papercuts from various regions throughout China, on loan from the collection of Jo Lonam, Emeritus Professor of the History of Decorative Arts and Design at California State University, Sacramento.

A local artist working with cut paper is Adriane Colburn, who for the past several years, has been working on a series of installations and maps that seek to organize and chart changes in the natural and urban landscape. These constructions, made of layers of hand-cut paper, often shed light on systems that exist below or those that are shielded by their exteriors.

Although paper folding has been traced back to before the sixth century in China, Japan is where paper folding was highly developed into a popular folk art called origami. World renowned origami artists Linda Mihara and Robert J. Lang represent different spectrums in the origami field. Born into a family of origami experts, Mihara began folding at a very young age. For over twenty years she has been known for her superior work with *sembazuru*, or the art of one thousand origami cranes. One of the pioneers of the cross-disciplinary marriage of origami with mathematics, Lang is now recognized as one of the world's leading masters of the art, with over 500 designs catalogued and diagrammed. He has consulted on applications of origami to engineering problems ranging from air-bag design to expandable space telescopes.

Originating in Japan's Nara Period (710-794), katagami, paper stencil patterns, were first used for applying designs in dye to leather goods such as stirrups and warrior helmets. They later came to be used for dyeing textiles and evolved greatly in style and complexity with the development of the kimono culture. Katagami were sold all over Japan by itinerant traders. The exhibition features several examples of katagami, alongside the intricate and meticulously crafted works of Jennifer Falck Linssen that have a foundation in katagami. Linssen takes the stencil (katagami) and leaves behind its original purpose, sculpting the paper into delicate vessels that play with light, shadow, form, and function.

In Korea, traditional handmade paper, called *hanji*, is made from the fiber of paper mulberry trees and therefore is durable, sturdy, and able to be shaped and even lacquered into waterproof containers, several of which are seen in the exhibition. Artist Jiyoung Chung uses *joomchi*, a traditional Korean papermaking technique, to create painted textural, wrinkled, and durable contemporary works of *hanji* art that push the technique to its outer limits.

The parol lantern of the Philippines is a national folk art, passed on through generations, that inspires innovation, creativity, and the expression of the Christmas spirit. Work by artist Fer Caylao of San Fernando, Pampanga represents the traditional style of parol lanterns, while artist Gene Apellido bends the traditional framework to create fresh, new, modern interpretations of the lanterns.

Taking the Philippines and paper as a starting point to explore identity and history, two contemporary artists move beyond fixed definitions of how paper is used. Recently returned from a Fulbright Scholar fellowship in Manila, artist Gina Osterloh explores issues of identity and environment within room-sized installations of paper that result in photographs of color and intrigue. Manila-born artist Mike Arcega explores issues of globalization through a focus on Filipino history and historic icons. Echoing the imperialism of the past, Arcega's work of paper armor points to both the common material's economic implications and its fragility.

An opening reception for this exhibit will take place Thursday, November 13, 2008. The exhibit opens to the public on Friday, November 14, 2008 and will be on display through February 15, 2009.

*****High-resolution images available*****

For 25 years, the **Museum of Craft and Folk Art** has provided the Bay Area with unique exhibitions and educational programs that inspire a variety of ethnically diverse communities. As the only folk art museum in Northern California, **The Museum of Craft and Folk Art** is known for its rich offering of focused and unique exhibitions of traditional and contemporary folk art and craft from around the world, its highly regarded Folk Art in the Schools program that reaches 10,000 elementary and middle-school students per year, and its support for contemporary craft and folk artists through its exhibitions, educational programs, and publications.

The **Museum of Craft and Folk Art** is a private, non-profit 501(c)3, membership-driven museum that receives support from members, donors, foundations, and the City of San Francisco, including Bank of America, Richard Essey, Foundation Source, Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, Walter & Elise Haas Fund, Gertrud and Harold Parker, and Sato Foundation. The Museum's move to Yerba Buena Lane has received support from Millennium Partners and the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency.

The Museum of Craft and Folk Art and the Museum's Gallery Store are located at 51 Yerba Buena Lane, connecting Market and Mission Street between 3rd and 4th Street in San Francisco's Yerba Buena Gardens arts district. The Museum and Store are open Tuesdays through Fridays, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission to the Museum's galleries is \$5; \$4 for seniors; children under 18 are free. Museum members enjoy free admission; free admission is offered to everyone on Tuesday. Admission to the Museum's Gallery Store is always free for all visitors. For more information call (415) 227-4888 or visit www.mocfa.org.